

Message Text

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TAGS: SHUM, UN
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (HRC) - US STATEMENT ON
CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

1. TEXT FOLLOWS OF STATEMENT GIVEN BY US REP GARMENT ON
FEB 6 AND RESPONSE BY AUSTRIA, THE SPONSOR OF THE RESOLUTION
UNDER DEBATE: BEGIN TEXT:

MR CHAIRMAN:

THE RESOLUTION NOW PRESENTED TO THE COMMISSION IS A
DISTINCT DISAPPOINTMENT.

WE HOPED THAT THE RESOLUTION WOULD SIMPLY AFFIRM SUPPORT
FOR THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS,
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, WOULD ENDORSE, WITHOUT RESERVATION
OR CAVIL, THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION.

AS I STATED YESTERDAY, THE UNITED STATES WAS PREPARED
TO GIVE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT TO SUCH A RESOLUTION. I ALSO
EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFINING THE RESOLUTION TO
RELEVANT MATTERS WHICH WERE NOT OF A SELECTIVE POLITICAL
NATURE. WE THOUGHT PROFESSOR ERMACORA'S ORIGINAL RESOLUTION
STRUCK AN APPROPRIATE AND NON CONTROVERSIAL BALANCE.
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NOW WE HAVE BEFORE US A RESOLUTION THAT HAS BEEN CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY, GREATLY WEAKENING SUPPORT FOR THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION, AND FURTHER LIMITING SUCH RECONGITION BY LINKING IT IN A VAGUE MANNER WITH GENERAL SUPPORT FOR THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FOREIGN OCCUPATION AND ALIEN RULE--WORDS FOR THE MOST INTENSELY SELECTIVE OF ALL CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL ISSUES. AND MORE CHANGES ARE FORESHADOWED BY THIS AFTERNOON'S DEBATE.

GIVEN THE APPARENTLY IRRESISTIBLE COMPULSION OF THE COMMISSION TO WEAKEN UNIVERSALLY APPLICABLE HUMAN RIGHTS PROPOSITIONS, AND TO INTRODUCE EXTRANEOUS AND PARTISAN POLITICAL MATTERS INTO EVERY AVAILABLE SETTING -- NO MATTER HOW FAR FETCHED -- OUR DISAPPOINTMENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN PREDICTABLE. BUT WE ARE DISAPPOINTED NEVERTHELESS. PARTICULARLY SINCE THIS ONE AND HALF PAGE RESOLUTION HAS BEEN DRAFTED, DEBATED, AND REDRAFTED SINCE 1972.

MR CHAIRMAN, I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT THIS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAS THE WILL OR CAPACITY TO ISSUE A STRAIGHTFORWARD DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION.

RESPONSE BY PROF. F. ERMACORA (AUSTRIA)
TO MR GARMENT'S REMARKS

I AM FROM A PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW QUITE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE OBSERVATIONS MADE BY THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, THE UN HAS DEVELOPED A VOCABULARY OVER MANY YEARS THAT IS EVEN ACCEPTED IN THIS COMMISSION. IT HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY DELEGATIONS WHICH ARE HERE AND SO IF I HAVE REDRAFTED THIS RESOLUTION IT IS DUE TO USING SUCH A VOCABULARY AS IS USUAL. I TRIED FOR A TEXT AGREEABLE TO ALL OF US.

END TEXT.

COMMENT FOR MOYHIHAN FROM GARMENT: YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN TAKING A LOOK AT THIS COLLOQUY--IT IS THE STORY OF THE UN COMPRESSED INTO A FEW LINES. PHELAN

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